A Strategic Shift for ELM
By Ken Pruitt

When our organization was founded in 1898 as the Massachusetts Forestry Association, our mission was to preserve forests and parks. In the 117 years that have followed, our mission changed to keep up with a broadening environmental movement that took on new challenges: clear air and water, minimizing toxic chemicals, and promoting smart growth, to name a few.

At ELM we spent the last year thinking strategically about our future work. We realized that we must once again change our mission to reflect the critical environmental issue of our generation: combating climate change. For this reason, we have revised our mission statement:

The Environmental League of Massachusetts is committed to combating climate change and protecting our land, water, and public health. By creating diverse alliances and building the power of the environmental community, we use our collective influence to ensure Massachusetts is a leader in environmental and economic sustainability.

There is no doubt that climate change is the critical environmental challenge of our era and the disruptions—social, economic, political, along with environmental—are already starting to appear. In order to address the challenges climate change presents, Massachusetts must be a national leader in creating major shifts in public policy around energy, land use, transportation, and habitat protection. With Congress in gridlock, it’s

Energy Policy at a Critical Crossroads
by Josh Craft

When it comes to energy policy, Massachusetts finds itself at a critical juncture: the decisions made this fall by the State Legislature will set the stage for decades to come. Our state’s utilities are poised to invest billions of dollars on energy infrastructure, potentially including gas pipelines and transmission lines, but just how we will move forward is unclear. It is paramount that our public dollars go toward diversifying our energy portfolio and creating a pathway for a clean energy future. We should not double down on decisions that led to our fossil fuel dependency. Instead, we propose the state invest money in a way that does the following:

- Builds on the success of Massachusetts’ energy efficiency programs, which are delivering almost $3 billion a year in benefits, allowing our economy to grow, reducing energy costs for customers, and making residents less vulnerable to rising electricity costs.
- Creates a pathway, through tax incentives and investments, to meet 40% of electricity needs in 2025 with solar and wind (onshore and offshore), with an additional 12% provided by low-carbon hydroelectricity.

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What You Zone is What You Get

by Nancy Goodman

You might yawn at the mere mention of zoning reform, but remember one thing: zoning is the critical blueprint for what gets built where. Without a doubt, your city or town is experiencing the impacts of poorly thought out and sited development: It eats up our landscapes, inefficiently uses our resources, creates acres of impervious surfaces that contribute to poor water quality, and forces us to get in the car to run simple errands.

After years of hard work, change is finally on the horizon: The current zoning-reform bill (S. 122) is a well balanced approach that gives municipalities additional tools to promote good development projects and gives developers more certainty. In terms of environmental benefits, the bill gives communities incentives to:

• Require open space residential design, allowing housing to be clustered

• Protect open space

• Require the use of low-impact development, which protects water quality and quantity

If a community adopts these practices, along with others detailed in the bill, the one primary environmental tool they gain is the ability to adopt zoning for natural resource protection. This would allow communities to zone at very low densities to protect lands of high natural resource value.

The bill had an early hearing in front of the Community Development and Small Business Committee, and the committee’s co-chairs seem supportive. In addition, the bill’s sponsors, Senator Dan Wolf (D-Harwich) and Rep. Steve Kulik (D-Worthington) are enthusiastic champions of zoning reform and want to see the bill passed this session, which bodes well for the legislature taking action.

Nancy Goodman, ELM’s Vice President for Policy, testified in support of the bill on September 15th. She was joined by our allies from the MA Smart Growth Alliance and a roomful of other supporters including planners, affordable housing advocates, mayors, a number of developers, and municipal attorneys. Earlier in the legislative session, ELM and the Alliance also hosted a well-attended briefing for legislators. Since then, ELM and allies have continued to meet with legislators to educate them on the benefits of the bill. All of this makes us hopeful for passage this year.

Zoning reform and smart growth are not just about improving how our cities and towns are built. They’re also part of the state’s Clean Energy and Climate plan and are necessary to achieve our ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals. It is this combination—local yet global, immediate yet forward-thinking—that makes zoning reform a major priority for ELM. Zoning reform is a vital tool to promote better development patterns and transportation choices, for now and for the future.

Nancy Goodman is ELM’s Vice President for Policy.

Photo by David Foster, Harvard Forest
• Protects ratepayers and the environment from risky and unnecessary expenditures on energy infrastructure, including gas pipelines.

• Modernizes our energy grid and allows for a more local, less centralized energy future.

Massachusetts has made tremendous strides in the past decade to become a national leader in clean energy and the environment. We have some of the nation’s most aggressive and successful energy efficiency programs, and the clean energy sector employs nearly 90,000 people, proving that economic development and environmental protection are not in conflict. In fact, economic growth in our state is robust even as our energy use and greenhouse gas emissions are decreasing.

Now is the time to re-affirm our progress, not take a step back by locking in unnecessary, multi-billion dollar gas pipelines. Plans pushed by gas companies and utility companies would shift the costs and risk of these projects onto the public by forcing electric customers to pay for new pipeline capacity. With our state already over-reliant on natural gas, we must diversify our energy portfolio and work to bring online new renewable energy resources.

Our Commonwealth has a mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050. We won’t hit those goals unless we make bold decisions that chart a new way forward for our energy supply. The legislature has opportunities to make those decisions this year and ELM is committed to seeing that they do.

Josh Craft is ELM’s Program Director.

**Shining Light on the Solar Net Metering Cap**

As the state legislature debates a long-term energy plan, some measures should be dealt with immediately, and raising the net metering cap is at the top of the list. Net metering provides compensation to solar generators for the power they feed back into the energy grid, giving solar generators a steady, predictable stream of payments. This incentive has helped bolster solar development in Massachusetts, which has stabilized energy costs, reduced emissions, and created jobs. But the state put a “net metering cap” in place a number of years ago, placing a limit on the amount of compensation that solar generators can receive for the energy their solar panels generate. That cap has been hit in over 150 communities across the state, and without net metering for new projects, solar development has ground to a halt. The state should lift the cap on net metering to continue encouraging this important and clean local energy resource.

**How will energy be delivered to Mass. in the future?**

Some current plans:

**The Pope and Climate Change**

“Mr. President, I find it encouraging that you are proposing an initiative for reducing air pollution. Accepting the urgency, it seems clear to me also that climate change is a problem which can no longer be left to a future generation. When it comes to the care of our common home, we are living at a critical moment of history.”

– Pope Francis, in his speech at the White House in September.

Pope Francis’s visit to the United States in September was a momentous event for our work on climate change. At ELM we are heartened by his message. Climate change is a global challenge, and while ELM’s focus is on actions that can be taken at the state and local level, we are always encouraged when global leaders put this issue front and center.
vital that our state take action quickly to help galvanize action in other states.

But our new mission also reflects a shift in how we intend to achieve our goals. While we will continue being a leading environmental voice inside the State House, over the next few years we will focus on bringing more voices to the discussion. We will expand our efforts to build an active member and volunteer network that will advocate for the climate-friendly and pro-conservation policies we all believe

As an organization, we will model the following values and behaviors:

Partnership. Strong collaborations with organizations, coalitions and individuals that create change at the scale we need.

Expertise. Highly credible and useful information as the basis for our advocacy.

Boldness. Change often requires challenging the status quo, without fear of powerful interests.

Persistence. Addressing our issues will take longer than one legislative session or gubernatorial term, so we actively build capacity today for bigger victories in the future.

Ken Pruitt is ELM’s Executive Director.

What our Strategic Shift Means for You:

As we make this concerted shift to address climate change, we’re looking for your help. Activism, of course, can take many forms. Here are some ways you can make a difference:

Show up and be heard: Join us at the State House for meetings with your state legislators, and call or email your legislators to garner their support on critical issues.

Lead locally: Organize your community to demonstrate support on environmental priorities and tell your friends, families, and neighbors about ELM and the work we’re doing together.

Stay connected: Follow our Facebook and Twitter page and sign up to receive our weekly e-bulletin. By staying connected and sharing our content, you help spread our message with just the click of a button.

Donate: We are extremely grateful for every dollar we receive. Increased donations allow us to dedicate more resources to the projects that will make a difference in protecting the environment and combating climate change.

ELM 2015 Fall Reception

Featuring Green Star Awards:

**Senator Marc Pacheco:**
For his tireless leadership combating climate change

**Leonard Sarapas, Boston Scientific, Inc.**
For his compelling advocacy on behalf of solar energy

**Lisa A. Podgurski, IBEW 103**
For her forceful support for renewable energy, solar and wind.

Join us for a cocktail reception benefiting the Environmental League of Massachusetts. Celebrate our shared achievements as we recognized those whose efforts have gone above and beyond!

*Appetizers and a Beer/Wine Bar*

Buy tickets:
https://elmfallreception2015.eventbrite.com
New Additions to the ELM Family

Staff

**Randi Soltysiak (Accountant)**

Randi began with ELM in March of 2015 and works part time as the organization’s accountant. Randi is the coordinator of Somerville Mothers Out Front and mother to April (7) and Ari (5). She earned her BA in English from Vassar College, and her J.D. from Boston College Law School. Her community organizing began in Vermont as an AmeriCorps volunteer. She is excited to join ELM!

**Ellen Tomlinson (Office Manager)**

Ellen joined ELM as Office Manager in May of 2015 after working as our Communications and Development Intern for four months. She earned Bachelors of Science in Environmental Studies and Political Science at Suffolk University. In her time at Suffolk, Ellen interned at the State House and held an on-campus position orchestrating 11 alternative spring break trips, working with Habitat for Humanity as well as other nonprofit organizations.

**Susan Thompson (Development Director)**

Susan joined ELM in May of 2015, bringing more than sixteen years of development experience. From 2004 to 2015, she was the Director of Foundation and Government Relations at the New England Aquarium, where she raised grants to support programs and exhibits. Before that, Susan worked in all aspects of fundraising and member services at the New England Wild Flower Society. She holds an MBA and MA in International Relations, both from Boston University and earned her BA at the University of Vermont. Prior to entering graduate school, Susan completed two years of service in the U.S. Peace Corps.

Board

ELM is thrilled to welcome two new members to our board: Robert Fishman and Ken Kimmell.

**Robert Fishman**

Bob is a real estate and environmental attorney at Nutter, McClennan & Fish LLP. He has been a legal instructor at both Boston College and Suffolk Law Schools and he has been an active and engaged member of various philanthropic and trade boards such as Combined Jewish Philanthropies and NAIOP. He brings to our board a deep understanding of the Dept. of Environmental Protection and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. He also brings a wealth of knowledge about land use, financing, leasing and the legislative process. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Law School.

**Ken Kimmell**

Ken is president of the Union of Concerned Scientists. He has more than 30 years of experience in government, environmental policy, and advocacy. He is a national advocate for clean energy and transportation policies and a driving force behind UCS’s “Power Ahead” campaign to build a large and diverse group of clean energy leadership states. Ken was the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and he also served as chairman of the board of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. He has also served as general counsel at the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs in Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick's administration, and spent 17 years as the director and senior attorney at a Boston-based law firm specializing in environmental, energy, and land-use issues. Originally from New York, he earned his bachelor's degree at Wesleyan University and his law degree at the University of California, Los Angeles.
ELM’s Corporate Council Expands

ELM is excited to announce three new members of our Corporate Council, building a bridge between the environmental community and leading Massachusetts companies that have demonstrated innovative environmental policies or practices.

Suffolk University

Long-time neighbor of ELM, Suffolk University has joined the Corporate Council. Suffolk has growing and evolving programs in environmental fields of study as well as an increasing interest in environmental initiatives among those on campus. ELM looks forward to engaging with Suffolk administration, faculty, and students throughout this partnership.

WasteZero

WasteZero works with municipalities to engineer programs that will increase recycling and reduce waste. Evolving over the last 20 years, WasteZero pioneered the “Pay-As-You-Throw” method of trash removal and has been finding innovative ways to efficiently meet trash disposal needs that work best for municipalities, residents, and the environment. ELM looks forward to working with WasteZero to minimize waste being produced in Massachusetts.

Next Step Living

Next Step Living is the groundbreaking company on a mission to make it easy, affordable and rewarding for homeowners to implement energy-saving solutions. Founded in Boston in 2008, the company is unique in offering a whole-home approach that helps homeowners save energy and money, reduce their carbon footprint, and live more comfortably. ELM commends Next Step Living for being a pioneer in their role as a fast-growing one-stop resource for advice, workmanship, and guidance, providing homeowners with easy and affordable energy-saving solutions.

Transportation Secretary Meets with ELM Corporate Council

On October 1st Massachusetts Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack met with members of ELM’s Corporate Council at the Boston College Club. Pollack talked about the need to reform and restructure the MBTA. She described serious failures of the current system but also plans to move us forward. Members asked questions about revenue and capital improvements for this winter and beyond. While no commitment was made for new revenue until management issues were resolved, improvements have been made to safeguard service this winter. Pollack demonstrated a depth of knowledge, a sense of frustration at the bureaucracy, and a sense of humor in the face of an enormous challenge. She is not afraid to pull in new stakeholders and take on changing the state’s transit system for the better.
Update on an Important Executive Order

As you may know, Governor Baker issued an Executive Order (#562) on March 31 required all state agencies to review all regulations under their jurisdiction, with the intention of “sunsetting” any regulation that is stronger than federal regulations, or that would hurt the Commonwealth’s “competitiveness,” among other problematic criteria. Our concerns include whether the regulatory review process will be transparent: the public should be able to see all comments, including those submitted by regulated industries who have a financial stake in the process.

ELM, with over 75 organizations, delivered a letter to Governor Baker encouraging him to open up this regulatory review process. These organizations, made up of a broad range of concerned organizations including business, labor, environmental, energy, public health, public safety, consumers, social services and others, have formed the “562 Coalition”.

As convener of the EO 562 Coalition, ELM is a strong advocate for an inclusive and transparent regulatory review process. In response to the letter sent by the Coalition expressing concern about the Executive Order, the Executive Office for Administration and Finance assured a more inclusive and transparent process. But the situation still requires our vigilance. We recently learned that the Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) has agreed to share all comments it receives. DEP is also forming a stakeholder group, to which ELM and other organizations have been invited to participate.

Earth Night 2015

On Tuesday, June 9, over 300 members of the ELM family — environmental colleagues, corporate and labor partners, elected officials and friends — gathered at the Boston College Club to celebrate another year of shared accomplishments. With stunning views of the city, drinks, and music — the room was packed and vibrant with conversations. We heard from a number of our friends and allies including Senator Ben Downing, Johanna Jobin formerly of EMD Millipore (now Biogen) and Joe Dorant of MOSES. By taking the stage to talk about the synergy between government, corporate responsibility, and environmental leadership our friends proved that we do better work together. Senator Downing was also honored with a 2015 ELM “Green Star” Award for his strong and continued leadership in helping to secure a clean energy future for the Commonwealth, while being a true friend and ally to ELM. Our staff and friends came away re-energized to continue fighting to protect the Massachusetts environment. We hope you’ll continue to join us, because we’re more powerful together!

To second Senator Ben Downing’s words that night: “Thank you for all you have done, but more importantly, thank you for what you will do.”

KEEP CURRENT WITH ELM

Environmental news in the Commonwealth evolves and changes daily. Stay current on the issues and keep up with ELM’s work between newsletters by following us on social media!
About ELM

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Join ELM in the Fight to Protect Our Environment

ELM is your voice and advocate on Beacon Hill and beyond, working to safeguard Massachusetts’s air, water, land and climate. You know us for our political savvy, our policy know-how, and a creative, collaborative approach that gets results. But we need your financial support to forge ahead. To become a member, renew your gift, or learn more ways you can help, contact us using the envelope inside or via environmentalleague.org or 617-742-2553. Thank you!